WAYSIDE VOICES

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WAYSIDE VOICES.

BY

WILLIAM STIVERS BATE.

Upon my pilgrimage along life's way
On either side have voices greeted me—
From whispering grove, and from the laughing sea.
And when it happened that my footpath lay
Through Mammon's marts, where men all eager play
Their games of greed; or if it chanced to be
Where Fashion's serfs to her bend willing knee,
Songs came to me, now mournful, and now gay.

And some I caught within the net of rhyme
And had imprisoned in the printed page,
That they to others from within their cage
Should sing again, as in the bygone time.
But not, I fear, in notes so strong and sweet
As did their captor by the wayside greet.

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L'ENVOI.

I launch to-day this little barque of song,
And wonder if 't will find some sheltering port,
Or be of adverse winds and waves the sport,
And founder in Oblivion's gulf ere long.
What fate befall, I hope it be no wrong
For one unfamed, the plaudits sweet to court
Of them that to the tuneful isles resort
Where poets sing—an ever growing throng.

And be it solace-laden; or give mirth
Because of lines uncouth, or ill set sail;
To shape my little craft's rude ribs of rhyme
Hath been a joy unto its builder worth
All his loved labor, should no favoring gale
Speed it in safety o'er the sea of Time.

Though Time doth ever in Life's loom
To warp of joy wed woof of gloom,
Yet I'll sing no despondent song,
For hope is right—despair is wrong.

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THE POET'S FANCIES.

I SAID, "O poet, pray tell me
How thy fair fancies come to thee,
How thou dost summon from their sleep
The thoughts that make men laugh and weep."

He answer made, "I cannot tell
Save from my heart they sudden well,
And from without, on land and sea,
Sweet voices murmur them to me.

That in the busy haunts of men,
In field and forest, glade and glen,
Into my mind as swift they fly
As meteors flash across the sky,

And when at eve, in painted boat
On painted wave I idly float,
From ships a-sail in heaven's blue sea
The helmsmen's calls seem borne to me.

Full often joy unto me brings,
From her bright realms on airy wings
A gladsome carol sweet and strong
To voice again in human song.

And sometimes, from the starless night
Thoughts come to me with heavy flight,
Ill favored birds from the dark shore
Where hopes lie wrecked forevermore.

When over Nature's pictured book
I dream by some wild woodland brook,
The little elfs that near it dwell
Of their fair haunts bid me to tell.

The little birds so blithe and free
A message also give to me;
And there, those songsters sweet among
Each tree and flower doth find a tongue.

And oft when 'thwart the summer sky
The clouds like white-plumed warriors fly,
The wind, their lusty trumpeter,
Doth with his blasts my bosom stir.

When on my couch I vigil keep
And woo in vain coquettish sleep,
The jeweled fingers of the night
Glean sheaves for me in star-fields bright.

And oft on pinions light of song
My fairest fancies to me throng,
Like flocks of sweetly warbling birds
Whose notes I fain would mesh in words.

Thus come my fancies from without,
But oft in sorrow and in doubt,
Through bitter tears that dim my sight
I "look into my heart and write."

For thoughts will come with sighs and tears
The soul's back-surge to other years,
Revealing on the sands laid bare
The griefs we hoped deep buried there.

Yet, often, from Hope's sun-lit sea
Bright bannered barques come unto me,
Like ships long sadly mourned as lost
Thrice welcome that they're tempest-tossed.

SCHOLAR VERSUS POET.

THE Scholar digs a diamond bright
From the deep caverns of the mind;
The Poet, that rare gem of light
On Fancy's queenly brow doth bind.

The Sage oft finds a precious shell
Where Reason's restless sea doth swirl
The Poet from within that cell
Doth take and set its priceless pearl.

THE TWO GUESTS.

WHEN Hope, sweet maid, abides with me
Through all the happy sun-lit hours,
My mind's like palace fair to see
Enparked midst lakes and trees and flowers;
With walls ablaze with pictures bright,
And from whose gardens drenched with dew,
Gay-plumaged birds with hearts all-light,
Rise singing to the heavens blue.

But when Despair doth with me dwell,
'Tis like a gloomy cavern set
Close by the gaping mouth of hell,
With walls by noisome vapors wet
To which uncanny creatures cling,
And 'round which slow my fancies fly
Like drowsy bats on heavy wing,
To dash against the rocks and die.

SPEARS AND ARROWS.

WOULDST thou launch a spear of light
Man's dark mind to reach?
Stand thou spotless in his sight,
Be what thou dost teach.

Wouldst thou wing a shaft of song
Him and sin to part?
Speed thine arrow, bright and strong,
Love-tipped from thy heart.

THE PATHS OF GLORY.

THERE is no Appian Way to Glory's gate
'Long which all march with legion's measured tread,
But paths whereby some reach it soon or late,
Some never—sinking by the roadside, dead.

A happy few—but ah! how very few—
Have gained that goal with footsteps swift and light,
But more, of toil, and tears, and conflict, knew,
Yet stumbled ever onward up the height.

And is it, too, thy joyless lot to live
From all thy fair ideals far apart,
The bud and blossom of thy life to give
To dreary tasks in which thou hast no heart?

To dwell a stranger with thy nearest kin,
Amid the chattering crowd to feel alone,
A soul an-hungered, have thy breast within,
That cries full-oft for bread, and gets—a stone?

To yearn on eagle-wing to ever soar
Within the empyrean of the mind,
Yet doomed to labor at Care's heavy oar
And to her gloomy galleys be confined?

To breathe the baneful atmosphere of greed,
Of mean ambitions, and of petty hate;
To sigh for field all fit for lofty deed,
Yet turning e'er the treadmill of thy fate?

Is such thy lot? Then thou dost only bear
The burdens greater souls than thine have borne,
Yet never wholly vanquished by Despair,
Though often by his cruel arrows torn.

Be thou, too, patient, and deserve a crown
Though victor-laurels never press thy brow—
Thy name may ring the nave of centuries down
Though fame doth pass thee by all coldly now.

Great Homer dead, and laid in grave unknown;
The seven cities where he begged his bread,
Were eager him an honored son to own
When glory was upon his memory shed.

But what unto that wondrous bard, when dust,
Was all his matchless wealth of unknown fame?
Methinks, when starving that but one poor crust
Were more to him than an unchoraled name.

And what *is* fame? Hath it not ever been
As oft foul crime's as lovely virtue's child,
Of hideous war a scarce less hideous twin,
With soil, and smoke, and carnage, all defiled?

Ah! what is glory at the warrior's grave,
To him who in its awful silence sleeps;
To her who unto him existence gave,
And o'er its all untimely ending weeps?

And what to her who wears a widow's weeds,
Whose pathway all thick-veiled with gloom appears,
Upon whose heart Despair, remorseless, feeds,
Who in his grave sees slain her future years?

And what unto the tender babes that cry
Through all the day for father and for bread,
And through the night with their lone mother lie,
Like her refusing to be comforted?

What is it to the weary land that groans
'Neath heel of him athirst for grander name,
Whose people's lives are but spurned stepping-stones
To higher niche within the wall of fame?

Not his, who on his kind waged cruel strife,
Is fairest name that History's page adorns,
But His who for them gave a sinless life—
The Prince of Peace, whose victor-wreath was thorns..

Full many a soul the ransom will not pay
That Fortune from her hostages demands,
But rather in her prison-house would stay
Than enter Glory's fane with unclean hands.

How many, too, her galling fetters wear,
Who in the race for wealth might win a crown,
If in the lists they manhood would forswear
And to the false god, Mammon, low bow down.

And at the game which pseudo-statesmen play,
One might have gained a senate's glittering prize
Would he aside his cherished honor lay
And like themselves, cast down gold-loaded dice.

Another, too, might fill a high-priest's chair
Did he not scorn to act a double part;
Not scorn with smooth and false lips to declare,
Fair words that have no echo in his heart.

Have such not riches, and have such not fame
E'en though the world may not approval nod?
Yea, they have more than fortune, place, or name—
The smile of Conscience, and the love of God.

But if Fame true, would on thy steps attend
Repulse her not, but closely thy walk scan,
That thou be worthy that she call thee friend,
And well-deserving of thy fellow-man.

And wonder not if she should lead thee o'er
Fair gardens unto homes of lords and kings,
For she hath key to open wide the door
Of palaces where Pleasure folds her wings.

But vaunt not, should men to thee seem to pay
All homage reverent, of word and look,
For on thy brow the laurel some will lay
Who care not for thy conquests, or thy book.

As little, too, for thine own self they care,
Nor, if unsung, would they thy friendship claim;
They fawn upon thee now that they may share
The lustre dazzling that illumes thy name.

And fickle Fame is, though so wondrous fair—
How many torches from her altar fire
Their proud possessors through a night oft bear,
To pale at morn, to flicker, and expire.

Where are names once emblazoned on her wall,
By sheep-like crowds hailed with the fool's fond might?
Have they not faded, slowly faded, all,
And passed, like evening, to Oblivion's night?

And are there not, too, in this later day,
Those praised as loud, to know as just a fate;
And from men's minds to slowly melt away
Like dark'ning landscape when the hour grows late?

Names, too, of those who noblest deeds have done
Are from us borne and dwarfed by flying years,
As is the eagle when he seeks the sun,
And dims in the blue vault, and disappears.

Then trust not Fame, nor heed her syren-songs,
Nor let her honeyed words thy self-love fan,
To thee Valhallaian shrine not yet belongs—
With all thy glory, thou art but—a man.

THE DEAREST FAME.

WHAT care I if the world shall frown
And my life's work neglected lies,
If all the coming years adown
I read my triumph in thine eyes.

What care I if indifferent Fame
Forever dwell from me apart,
If I know, darling, that my name
Is graven on thy loving heart.

Though sweet were glory, and to-day
To win a world's glad-proffered prize,
Yet far less precious would be they
Than what I read in thy fond eyes.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

LINES FOR THE CENTENNIAL OF HIS INAUGURATION AS PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

I SAW an old yet stately ship
Her cables for the last time slip
And ebb with evening away;
And as she drifted thwart the gloom
More grandly did her spars up-loom
Than through the long bright Summer day.

So, when a great and good man dies
And passes to the sea that lies
Unfathomed, yet so near the world;
Far loftier to us seems he then,
Then ere,—in port beyond our ken,—
His noble life's fair sails were furl'd.

THOU, when on earth, wert men too near
For them to have a vision clear
Of thy majestic mind and mien;
But 'bove the ocean of the Past
Thy towering figure is at last
In all its matchless grandeur seen.

First Captain of our Ship of State!
If from that sea, God-granted fate
  May let thee call its sad waves o'er,
Speak to thy people here, to-day,
And guide till Time our barque shall lay
  In Port of Peace forevermore.

Thou are not DEAD! Thou livest still
In words and deeds our hearts to thrill
  To actions worthy of our birth.
'Neath yon dear flag at mast-head high—
Our banner borrowed from the sky—
  Its wedded stars the hope of Earth.

THE GREATEST KING.

DOST thou know who's the greatest king
The one of highest worth,
The prince who wears the signet ring
Most potent of the earth?
'Tis Baby.

And knowest who's his humblest slave,
The plaything of his will,
Who for him her life nearly gave,
And glad would give it still?
His Mother.

Dost thou know who's the minister
That waits beside his throne,
Who does to every wish defer
And makes his law his own?
His Father.

And wouldst thou know the fair domain
That he doth rule supreme,
The realm that glories in his reign
And makes his deeds its theme?
The household.

Great kings there are who empires guide
And rule in august state,
But none hath a domain as wide,
Nor wields a power as great,
As Baby.

THE INJURED FRIEND.

IN restless mood, one long dark day
I bade Time haste from me away,
That speedily I might be blest
With presence of a lovelier guest.

Then more in sorrow than in wrath
He left and trod his deep worn path,
But moved away with footsteps slow,
Long lingering, as if loath to go.

But soon, to my delight, he brought
The guest whose presence I had sought,
And I, all thankful, begged him bide
Forever welcome at our side.

But then, alas! too late perceived
That I a friend away had grieved,
For from me soon he quickly sped,
And with him, too, my fair guest fled.

TO A SEED.

HOW lifeless thou dost seem to be
Yet thou dost hold life's mystery,
Thy bosom doth within it keep
A secret wonderful and deep.

Little seed, if thou shouldst tell
The secret thou dost guard so well,
Then marveling man would quickly know
The fount whence his life-currents flow.

Thou livest! Yet thou needs must die
And deep within the dark earth lie,
That from thy grave a tree may grow,
And blossoms sweet upon it blow.

So, too, must man return to earth,
The mother kind that gave him birth,
That from her bosom he may rise
To nobler stature in the skies.

UNACHIEVED.

HOW oft the noblest spirits sigh,
That toil however well they will,
Their bravest undertakings still
Fail to achieve their purpose high.

The baffled sculptor knows there lurks
Within the stone (and hence he broods)
A statue that his art eludes,
Far greater than his greatest works.

The painter's fervid fancy glows
With picture of a lovelier scene
Than his skilled hand with touch most keen
Upon the canvas e'er bestows.

The poet yearns to coin in speech
The brightest bullion of his brain,
And eager strives, but all in vain—
The words are e'er beyond his reach.

The student delving in the mines
Of knowledge stored through ages past,
Amid those priceless treasures vast
His own to make them, vainly pines,

And scientist, upon the shore
Of Nature's dark mysterious sea,
Doth often sadly mourn that he
Its depths profound cannot explore.

But who shall question it is wise
That Heaven limits human power,
That e'er before us, beckoning, tower
Heights grander yet for our emprise.

The soul self-satisfied is dead!
But joyous triumphs are in store
For him that conqu'ring, strives the more
Within yet higher paths to tread.

SEEDS OF HARVEST.

WOULDST thou garner golden grain,
Thou must toil and oft in vain.

Wouldst thou drink the ruby wine,
Thou must bruise the fruit of vine.

Wouldst thou see the red sun-rise,
Night's black wing must veil the skies.

Wouldst thou view the rain's bright bow,
Nature's tears must freely flow.

Wouldst thou see the diamond's light,
Thou must chafe it day and night.

Wouldst thou have pure gold of mind,
As by fire 't must be refined.

Wouldst thou win the crown of life,
Thou must know of pain and strife.

Wouldst thou pass into the sky,
Thou must in the dark tomb lie. ——

Deep ponder this, but do not mourn,
Oft greatest joys are sorrow-born.

Oft from tear-watered gardens rise
Life's fairest flowers towards the skies—

The hope that Christian brow adorns,
Was purchased with a crown of thorns.

SUCCESS.

WHAT is success? To make full sure,
Much gold and silver to secure,
And grind the poor?

Is it in gilded coach to roll,
To feast from epicurean bowl,
And starve thy soul?

To be unto thy body kind,
It purple and fine linen find,
And stint thy mind?

Is it a nation's life to save,
To boast the laurels of the brave,
Yet Passion's slave?

Or proudly wear the robe of State,
And gain by thine oppressions great,
A people's hate?

Nay, none of these! But to possess
A mind rich stored—a soul not less—
Wrong to redress:

The poor to aid, none to oppress;
And have all men thy memory bless,
Is true success.

TO A BUTTERFLY.

UNHAPPY butterfly!
Thou flewest far and high
When fair summer held her sway;
But thy proud hour is past,
Thy life is fleeting fast,
And shall soon ebb all away.

When bright the sunlight beamed
It to thy gay heart seemed
That e'er should stay the hours;
That ever thou shouldst sup
From many a fairy cup,
The nectar of the flowers.

But from the North swept fast
A fierce and chilling blast,
Laying thy cup-bearers low;
And though it here and there
Did a sweet blossom spare,
They, like thee, must quickly go.

Unhappy butterfly!
How like to thee, am I—
My life, too, fast fades away;
Though I hope, that it is
But the torpid chrysalis
Of a brighter, better day.

AN ARCADIAN'S SOLILOQUY.

ALONE midst all the city's din,
Alone, though thousands hem me in!
Far lonelier are the crowded streets
Than the green fields and fair retreats
Fond memory greets.

There blithesome birds speak unto me
And cheery brooks laugh merrily,
There wild-flowers on me kindly smile,
And all the scene doth me beguile,
To rest the while.

Here, thousands pass without a word,
Naught but rude sounds of trade is heard,
Scarce else is seen than anxious face—
All forward press with eager pace
In life's fierce race.

Oh! let me quickly speed away
To odorous fields, with blossoms gay,
Where I again shall gladly find
Joy for my weary soul and mind
Here close confined.

SHIPS AT SEA.

A SHIP at sea! A ship at sea!
Ah! watch her dancing merrily
O'er dead men's graves
Beneath the waves!
A ship at sea 's a charming sight
When speeding through the soft star-light,
And summer gales
Fill out her sails.

A ship at sea! A ship at sea!
Ah! look! she staggers helplessly
O'er dead men's graves
Beneath the waves!
A ship at sea 's a fearful sight
When storm-chased through the winter night,
She madly bowls
Upon the shoals.

THE EVENING GUN.

[Governor's Island, New York Harbor.]

THE day is done!
The evening gun
Proclaims it dead, o'er isle and bay;
Midst fortress walls
With shrill sad calls
Its dirge the brazen bugles play.

But do not mourn,
For merry horn
Will soon be sounding o'er the sea,
And from the night
A day more bright,
On dew-gemmed wings will come to thee.

So when thy life,
Its storms and strife,
At peaceful eve have passed away;
May trumpets sweet
In Heaven greet
Thee with their 'rapturing reveille.

A PRAIRIE DUEL.

FORTH on the plain as fades the day.
Two warriors ride in bright array,
To champion the savage bands
That file behind them o'er the sands.

With scornful taunts the foemen greet
Each other ere they fiercely meet
Upon the field in battle shock,
Like thunderbolt against the rock.

Firm on their steeds they sit erect,
In gaudy trappings gaily decked,
With each in hand his keen edged lance,
Less keen though than his hawklike glance.

Like eagles now they circle 'round,
Then plunge their spears into the ground,
Where, from each of the slender staves,
A war-flag red, defiance waves.

Again they speed about the plain,
Then giving their wild steeds the rein
And catching up their lances bright,
They close in thickest of the fight.

The lances sharp their bucklers bite,
But neither yields to spearsman's might;
Who sweep by like a hurricane,
Then wheel and onward charge again.

Once more their glittering lances flash,
Once more their shields together clash,
When breaking 'neath Matopa's stroke,
His foe's blade leaves its staff of oak.

Which soon as the brave Mandan sees
His own lance from its thong he frees,
And with a quick glance of disdain
Casts down upon the dusty plain.

Then loud they sound the wild war-whoop
And swiftly on each other swoop,
Like battling eagles in the sky
Their gay plumes waving bright and high.

On like the prairie fire they sped,
Their short bows drawn to arrow head,
And quick almost as string's sharp twang
The shafts against the bucklers rang.

Five times the archers sharply wheeled
Upon that hoof-ploughed battle-field,
While 'gainst their stout shields' leathern mail
The whizzing arrows beat like hail.

At last the Cheyenne sped a dart
That pierced the Mandan's charger's heart,
But ere he sank upon the ground
Matopa reached it with a bound.

The Cheyenne not to be outvied
As quick is by his horse's side,
Which being by the chief set free,
Doth swiftly from the conflict flee.

Now fast again the arrows fly
Till empty both their quivers lie;
But more than one sharp dart has found
A limb exposed and left a wound.

Once more they raise the shrill war-cry,
Resolved to triumph or to die,
And down upon each other bear
With gleaming hatchets high in air.

Upon the bucklers fall the strokes
Like wood-man's axe on forest oaks;
But still with all their savage art
They fail to strike a vital part.

At last the Cheyenne's battered shield
Unto Matopa's arm doth yield.
He casts it from him to the ground,
The Mandan's there as soon is found.

Then tomahawks quick meet in air
And from their helves are shattered there.
The braves once more together fly
With flashing knife and flaming eye.

Blow quickly follows deadly blow,
And from a score of wounds doth flow
Upon that dry and thirsty plain,
A shower of blood, like drops of rain.

Not long can rage the storm of steel,
And soon the Cheyenne 's seen to reel,
His raised arm drops, his brain swims round,
His tall form sways, he bites the ground.

Then on him quick Matopa leaps,
And 'bout his scalp his keen knife sweeps;
And rising, lifts into the air
The dead chief's lock of raven hair.

He waves it thrice above his head,
But soon his hour of triumph 's fled,
For with a shout of victory hoarse
He falls upon his foeman's corse.

Then silently, within one grave,
The two bands lay their champions brave,
And guided by the pole-star's light,
They file away into the night.

SABBATH BELLS.

HUSH! hearken to the Sabbath bells
As high their gladsome music swells
Upon the blossom-scented breeze
In soul-exalting harmonies.

How sweetly come and go the calls
Of those bronz'd watchmen on the walls
Of Zion's holy house of prayer,
Borne on the pinions of the air.

How faithful in their ivy'd tower,
They vigil keep, and hour by hour
In measured melodies repeat
The echoes of Time's flying feet.

I joy to hear those far-off chimes
Out-ringing now their wordless rhymes
And seeming unto me to say:
"O, sinner, hasten here away."

To listen to the liquid notes
Out-leaping from their brazen throats
And pleading with hearts care-opprest
To come unto their courts and rest.

Oft in my childhood's happy hours
I heard the voices from those towers
Invoking me my steps to turn
To Wisdom's ways, of her to learn.

And one day those grief stricken bells
Tolled slowly forth their solemn knells,
And taught to me with muffled breath
What sorrow was and what was death.

But loud and merry rang the peal
When with the church's holy seal
Two happy hearts by Love made one
Passed forth upon life's race to run.

And when white lay the Christmas snow
I heard their gladsome greetings go
O'er forest, field, and fettered fen,
Proclaiming "Peace, good-will to men."

And soon upon a midnight drear,
As breathed his last the poor old year,
Did they the sad glad news outring
"The King is dead! Long live the King!"

And cheerily at Easter-tide
Their voices echoed far and wide:
"Rejoice that from Christ's tomb this day
The angels rolled the stone away."

Hush! hark! again ring out the calls
Of those bronz'd watchmen on the walls
Of Zion's holy house of prayer—
Come, let us to their courts repair.

A MAY MORNING.

I WONDER if the world e'er knew
A breeze more soft or sky more blue
Than greets this balmy vernal morn,
A day-child in yon heaven born!

From out the budding hawthorn floats
The gladdest of the thrush's notes,
While in the blooming orchard near
The red-breast warbles sweet and clear.

The grass ne'er had a greener hue,—
Each tender blade begemmed with dew—
Nor yonder lakelet's mirror bright
Reflect a lovelier morning's light.

The lilac breathes a rich perfume,
And sweet is the wisteria's bloom,
While tender lilies of the vale
A fragrance delicate exhale.

The south-wind through the garden goes
And wakes the winter-slumb'ring rose;
Thence wanders on with fickle will
Adown the glen and o'er the hill.

And from beneath his golden crown
The sun on all the land looks down,
With glances warm and fond that start
A swifter flood through Nature's heart.

Mine, long a-wintered, too doth glow
With her full pulse's overflow,
And eager is to soar and sing
With yonder skylark on the wing.

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Ah! surely the world never knew
A breeze more soft or sky more blue
Than greets this balmy vernal morn,
A day-child in yon heaven born!

A DAY AT NAVESINK HIGHLANDS.

HOW glad we land
Upon the strand
Of sea and mountain meeting,
And chase away
The happy day
Whose hours too fast are fleeting.

We climb the height
With footsteps light,
And gaze out o'er the ocean,
Where many a ship
Doth rise and dip
With slow and stately motion.

And then we rove
Through field and grove,
The earth with wild flowers smiling,
While oft is heard
The voice of bird,
The joyful hours beguiling.

Now on the tide
We gaily ride,
Across the rushing river,
The crested wave
Our barque doth lave,
And make her gently quiver.

And when we reach
The wreck strewn beach,
The weary sun is setting,
While many a star
O'er sea afar,
The azure vault is fretting.

Upon the shore
With sullen roar
The baffled surge is dying,
And with the day
The white osprey
Into the west is flying.

And soon the sun
His race has run,
And homeward we are turning,
While o'er the bay
The guiding ray
Of beacon light is burning.

So, too, alas!
Must quickly pass
Life's day and all its dreaming,
But through the night
May Hope's clear light
Upon our path be beaming.

SUMMER HOURS.

I LOVE these summer afternoons to lie
Beneath the over-arching ancient elm,
And watch the white-winged cloud-ships sail the sky,
An air-sprite steersman at each shadowy helm.

To see them slowly marshal in the west
Like line-of-battle ships for grand review,
In crimson flags and streaming pennants dressed,
Near sun-lit shore of sea of heaven blue.

To breathe the fragrant breath of hay new mown,
Upwafted from the willow-girted vale,
To feel the kisses of fresh breezes blown
From off the lakelet by the southern gale.

To hear the buzz of honey-freighted bee
That from the lily's snowy chalice sups,
And low of cattle, buried to the knee
Mid daisies white and burnished buttercups.

To catch the music of their tinkling bells
Above the toiling mill-wheel's drowsing hum,
And curfew sweet, from yon church-tow'r that tells
The restful hours of even-tide have come.

To listen to the laughter of the stream
That down the deep glen gayly dancing goes,
While all the happy hours away I dream
Indifferent how Life's devious current flows.

All careless that when golden summer's past
Unto these woods and fields shall come a day
When 'fore the North-wind's fierce and withering blast
Their leaves and blossoms shall be swept away.

Rejoicing that these perfect days are mine,
That when have come and gone the snow and rain,
As bright will bloom the violet and the vine,
As sweet will smile the flowery fields again.

AN AUTUMN AFTERNOON.

VINE-BURDENED hills of brown and gold,
A valley robed in red and green,
The river its fair arms enfold,
All silvern, silent and serene.

Two lovers by the water's edge,
A voiceless speech of eye to eye,
A sigh, a prayer, a kiss, a pledge,—
Hand that in loving hand doth lie.

A dreamy languor in the air,
Two happy hearts beneath the sky,
Content to fondly linger where
The frost-kissed leaves blush red and die.

A shower of sunshine on the hills,
From forest boughs a rosy rain;
Peace that the heart of Nature fills,
The peace that autumn brings again.

THE WEST WIND.

COME with me to the autumn wood,
The West Wind is at play,
For he's in a right jocund mood
This bright October day.

Before his breath leaves fly like chaff,
Far out upon the moor,
O'er which he trips with jolly laugh,
With footstep light and sure.

Now see him from the brown burrs shake
Their ripe nuts to the earth,
Where blithesome boys and girls awake
The chipmunks with their mirth.

Down stooping to a winsome maid
Amid the leaves aglare,
He deftly loosens from its braid
Her soft and sunny hair.

Then quickly kisses her sweet cheek,
And lips, and neck, so fair,
So warmly that through all the week
A blush will linger there.

Then swift away he lightly skips
O'er valley and o'er hill,
And dances with the white-winged ships,
And with the white-armed mill.

Now fast he flies across the wave,
Far out upon the sea,
And with their crests, the happy knave
Romps onward in great glee.

But stay with me within the wood,
He'll soon be back again,
With train as gay as Robin Hood
And his right merry men.

A PICTURE OF AUTUMN.

OF all the year, I love the days
When Autumn her soft flushed cheek lays
Upon the hillside, and the gold
Of the gay garments that enfold
Her rare voluptuous form, is seen
Aglow amidst the grasses green.

Queen is she of the mellowing world,
With banners on the cliffs unfurled;
Her crown the leaves and berries red
That wreathe her auburn-tressèd head,
And sceptre, yon bolt-riven pine
Enspiraled by the purpling vine.

How lovely is she as she lies
Adreaming 'neath the yellow skies,
Her olive arms all fondly wound
The drowsy northern world around,
While o'er her couch the mountains keep
Their vigil true while she doth sleep.

Anon, a truant tress is stirred
By the warm south-wind, and a bird
Enamored of the vision sweet,
Her beauty's praises doth repeat
From yonder flaming maple tree
In notes of rippling melody.

She stirs! Ah! dear one, do not wake
And from me thy sweet presence take;
But sleep while amorous airs caress
Thy red lips, and thy comeliness
My love of beauty constant feeds,
Yet e'er increasing hunger breeds.

Stay beauteous one, for shouldst thou go
Then Winter, with his beard of snow,
Will hither stride with eager pace,
Make thy fair haunts his biding place,
And with his coldly glittering dart,
Tranfix both mine and Nature's heart.

A MAIDEN'S JEWEL BOX.

I KNOW a maid with casket fair,
Of gems of purest beauty rare,
With which at dewy eve and morn
She doth her lovely self adorn.

Her diamonds are her sparkling eyes
Like stars in bright Italia's skies
Which lovers view with rapt delight
And wish for never ending light.

Her rubies are her pouting lips,
Red as the rose the wild bee sips,
And sweet as honey for his cell
From lotus-flower and asphodel.

Her matchless pearls—her snow white teeth,
Oft peeping from their rosy sheath,
In bands of faultless coral set
As rich as those which sea-caves fret.

Her diadem 's her golden hair,
Whose tresses kiss her neck so fair,
Then fondly nestle on her breast
Like birdlings in their soft warm nest.

Her balmy breath is her perfume,
Sweet as June roses in full bloom,
Or like unto the spicy breeze
That blows o'er fair Arabia's seas.

And now, methinks, that you have guessed
The jewels by that maid possessed,
Are neither gold nor precious stone,
And casket,—her dear self alone.

Her heart—ah! even I can't tell
What favored guests within it dwell;
But surely love and purity,
And, mayhap, there is room for me.

FOOLISH MOTHS.

FROM out the dark, one Summer night,
A moth flew at my candle-light,
And unto it he sped his flight
Until it scorched his wings, all white.

"A foolish little moth," said I,
"Into the cruel flame to fly."
To which he seemed to make reply,
"For love of it I gladly die."

And then methought, not moth alone
To Love doth such allegiance own,
For man, who her fierce fires hath known,
As blind devotion oft hath shown.

FIDELITY.

O FRIEND! if Fate shall bid us part,
Or let our lives run on together;
E'er true to thee shall beat my heart
In foul as well as pleasant weather.

The friendship is of little worth
On Fortune's smile alone depending,
Such passion breathes too much of earth
To be a gift of Heaven's sending.

So if thou canst not be my friend
In foul as well as pleasant weather,
Then let this hour thy fealty end—
But ne'er forget—I'm thine forever.

SMOULDERING FIRES.

'NEATH yonder ashes sleeps a fire
That seems to flicker and expire,
Yet shall its hidden slumbering spark
Live through the hours all cold and dark.

So in my breast there glows a flame,
That from Love's holy altar came,
Which through Denial's dismal night
Shall constant burn though hid from sight.

And should a maiden that I know
But lightly on those embers blow,
They'd burst into an ardent blaze
Of loving words and loving ways.

FROWNS AND SMILES.

WHY seem the skies, till now so bright,
Clove-veiled with shadows as of night;
And the blithe birds no more to sing,
But mute to sit with folded wing:
The once glad breeze to mourn and mourn
In doleful songs 'neath pine and thorn;
And flowers that gaily smiled, be found
With faces bowed unto the ground?—
Ah! Love hath frowned!

But now the woodland's feathered throng
Breaks forth in sweet and 'rapturing song;
The dark and threatening clouds I find
With lambent light are silver-lined;
The winds no longer sigh and mourn,
But on their wide-spread wings are borne
From violets and roses wild
Rare fragrance of their bosoms mild.—
Ah! Love hath smiled!

BURDEN BEARING.

O LOVE upon thy couch long lain!
My soul goes out to thee to-day,
To cheer thy lone hours, and thy pain
To gently woo from thee away;
Yes, woo it all away from thee,
E'en though it e'er abide with me.

When thou wert free and strong and well
My heart though yearning had no voice,
No tale of love to thee to tell;
But thou art sick—it has no choice
Than long to woo thy woes from thee,
E'en though they e'er abide with me.

Thy sorrows fill my eyes with tears,
I must my sympathy declare,
Oh! that I now and through the years
Might all thy dear heart's burdens bear;
That I might bear them all for thee,
E'en though they e'er abide with me.

Who knows the gladness days may bring;
What weeds of sorrow we may wear?
May joy unto thee quickly wing;—
Oh! would that I thy griefs might bear,
That I might bear them all for thee,
E'en though they e'er abide with me.

O Love how long and vain I've tried
My heart against thyself to steel;
But no, it will not be denied,
It is not stone, and it must feel;
Oh! that I could woo thine from thee
Forever to abide with me.

CONSTANCY.

HE loved her with as warm a love
As ever to man's bosom came,
And yet as pure and true a flame
As angels know in realms above.

But Heaven smiled not on his suit,
And laid his heart's fair orchards waste
And left upon his lips the taste
Of Disappointment's bitter fruit.

Yet still he fondly loved her, for
Is there aught true these words above:
"The love that changeth is not love?"—
Indeed his passion grew the more.

So tenderly did she refuse
So thoughtful for his love and pride,
'Twas sweeter by her be denied
Than have some meaner spirit choose.

Far better thus his fond dream ends
  Than in the flames of rage and hate,
  For now they share the fair estate
That's granted but to storm-tried friends.

How strange the ways of Providence!
  That He should let Love build her nest
  So soft and warm within the breast,
And then so quickly bid joy thence.

Yet better is it Love should sing
  Her carol there though not for long,
  Than that her sweet ennobling song
Should never through the heart-chords ring.

For hearing once her heavenly strain
  The soul to higher life is born,
  And though it be its lot to mourn
Sweet echoes of the song remain.

LOVE'S LATER HARVEST.

MY darling, oft I ponder
That through so many days,
Together we should wander
In Friendship's narrow maze,
Unknowing that but yonder
Ran Love's far fairer ways.

Not that our feet were weary,
For Friendship's feet are light,
Not that our paths were dreary,
For Friendship's paths are bright;
But Love's are far more cheery,
Are flowery with delight.

In them let us be moving
All undeterred by fears,
Their brighter beauties proving
Though grief may come, and tears—
Make up in fonder loving
Our loss of other years.

THE BRIDE OF DEATH.

SHE was a maiden lily-fair,
With eyes like violets bright with dew,
And sunshine tangled in her hair,
While on her cheeks twin-roses blew.

And lovers had she, fond and brave,
Who earnestly their causes plead,
But unto each she answer gave:
"I am yet all too young to wed."

And then there came, one winter day,
A suitor grim, that men call Death,
Who spake as loving words as they,
But in a hoarser, huskier breath.

She shrank from him and made reply:
"I am too young to be thy wife,
And pardon me, grave sir, but I—
I fondly love the fair youth, Life."

"And full as fondly loveth he,
And doth rich proofs of love bestow,
And so, kind sir, pray pardon me
That I must say unto thee, no."

He answered not, but took her hand—
Her roses now were ashes gray—
And to his home in Shadow Land
He led his sweet girl-bride away.

And in that country, I am told,
She hath a home more glad and bright
Than that she left, a thousand-fold,
Where cometh neither woe nor blight.

For when was passed the ebon gate
Death flung his sable mask aside,
And she beheld with heart elate
An angel heavenly, was her guide.

DEJECTION.

BENEATH thy spell, sweet evening star,
My fancies fly to worlds afar:—
Oh! that they could bring back to me
Word from my Love 'yond Death's dim sea.

Oh! that they could unto me tell
Where she doth this fair evening dwell;
Say if with mine her heart keeps beat
And holds it in remembrance sweet.

Like Noah's dove, from o'er that sea
My fancies backward come to me,
With weary foot and weary wing,
But home no olive branch they bring.

Canst thou not tell, O Venus, queen
Of night, all radiant and serene?
Canst thou not look within her heart
And say if I in it have part?

No answer? Nay. No answer, save
The sobbing of the mournful wave,
That breaks upon yon lonely shore
With baffled yearning ever more.

No answer? *Yea!* O'er Death's dark sea
Hope speaks in voice divine to me,
And I believe, my heart at rest,
That I am of my Love's possessed.

IN EXTREMIS.

WHY tremblest thou my soul
To spread thy wavering wing
For thine eternal goal?
This world is not thy home,
But yonder star-lit dome,
Where songs angelic ring.

Why tremblest thou my soul,
Though clouds the heavens fill
And black the billows roll?
Remember Galilee,
The Lord, who calmed its sea,
Can whisper, "Peace, be still."

Then tremble not my soul
Like some storm-startled dove,
Soon back the clouds will roll
And thou shalt take thy flight
To yon Celestial height,
Death's battlements above.

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN.

THERE is a balm for every wound,
For every heart-ache, every care;
Time hath a sure elixir found
For every soul that doth despair.

Some maladies more quickly yield
Than others to his soothing art,
Yet soon or late they all are healed,
E'en that most sad, a broken heart.

For if, perchance, one hopeless saith
"No cure for mine can e'er be found,"
He pours his sovereign balsam, death,
All gently in the cruel wound.

TO DEATH.

O, EVER living, ever sleepless, ever dreadful
Death!
Whose drink is blood, the slain thy food,
and pestilence thy breath,
Thou scourge of every zone!
In age to come, when Time his last loud
bugle-call shall sound,
Thou wilt amid the awful ruin of the world
be found,
Full sated, and——alone.

SURCEASE OF SORROW.

DEAD but a year,
Yet never tear
Her once sad eyes seem now to know,
Though many a day
We thought that they
Would never for him cease to flow.

And yet full sure
Love doth endure,
And burn with true though hidden flame;
Her heart doth still
All fondly thrill
At thought or mention of his name.

But God's own voice
Bade her rejoice,
And brush her bitter tears away;
And to her said:
"Lift up thy head
And sorrow's robes aside now lay."—

When hearts are torn
They need must mourn,
For God hath wisely made us so,
But full as wise
He bids us rise
Soon from our gloomy seats of woe.

For little, Earth
Or life were worth,
If we should sorrow all our days,
Nor could we fight
For bread or right
If threading ever grief's dark ways.

RESURGAM.

O SORROWING heart, be comforted!
In some wise way beyond our ken,
Our loved ones sleeping with the dead
To us shall be restored again.

The Scriptures give assurance sweet
That on the blest Elysian shore
We shall with hearts all joyous greet
Our dear ones who have gone before.

And every tribe in every age—
The greatest and the best of men—
Untutored savage, learnèd sage—
Have held, the dead shall rise again.

Yea, true it is, the dead shall live,
For God would not such confidence
To all mankind so fully give
Did He not mean to call us hence.

And Nature doth the lesson teach
That from our dead selves we shall rise,
To stature now beyond our reach
Within the garden of the skies.

The fairest flower that decks the glen
Once slept within the earth's dark breast,
And in it shall repose again
To rise in richer beauty drest.

The winter comes, and Nature lies
Close-wrapped in winding sheet of snow,
But from her sepulchre shall rise
When southern zephyrs softly blow.

Shall rise and her fair form array
In the new-wove and beauteous dress
Her bright hand-maiden, winsome May,
Hath brought to robe her loveliness.—

O sorrowing heart, be comforted!
In some wise way beyond our ken,
Our loved ones sleeping with the dead
To us shall be restored again.

IN MEMORIAM.

I WOULD a simple garland lay
Upon the bier of her as sweet
A woman God hath let me meet
Upon my life's mysterious way.

A pilgrim on whose pathway glowed
A larger measure of the light
That beameth from his presence bright
Than falls upon my darker road.

A traveler who seemed to hear
Songs lost to souls less sanctified,
And her sweet spirit to abide
Within a holier atmosphere.

A soul as spotless and as white
As new-born snow, or the fair rose
That doth so lovingly repose
Upon her bosom through the night.

Her gentle nature ever kept
The blossom of its perfect youth,
And in her heart abode fair Truth,
A sentinel that never slept.

As sweet as sunlight was her mind,
With noble scorn of all things base,
And in no close nor narrow space
Were her warm sympathies confined.

No pride low-born did she possess,
In strifes vainglorious bore no part
Her happy kingdom was the heart,
Her mission here to love and bless.

And from her presence seemed to fall
Like benedictions from on high,
Or dew from out the evening sky,
A shower of sunshine on us all.

For hers was an unselfish heart
That gladly shared another's load,
And those she comforted, bestowed
The tribute "Smile of God thou art."

That smile was mirrored in her face,
While in her deep and tender eyes
Two gentle spirits from the skies,
Seemed to have found a dwelling place.

But one day, on her fair brow fell
The shadow of the angel Death.
She smiled, and with scarce altered breath
Said, "Lord, Thou doeth all things well."

And then upon another day
The angel laid in his, her hand,
And to the bright celestial land
All silently they sped away.

She's dead! And yet those tender eyes
Are only closed in blissful sleep,
For He who did o'er Lazarus weep
Shall bid her, too, like him, arise.

She is *not* dead! She still doth live
In memories of word and deed,
That are the precious fruitful seed
Of harvests yet new joy to give.

And though she here ne'er woke the lyre
Nor wrought in measured verse her song,
We know she doth to-day belong
To the angelic heavenly choir.

And she would not have us to weep
Nor in despair's dark caverns grope,
But ever the sweet blessed hope
Of her dear Saviour's rising keep.

But love bids sorrow's tears to flow,
  Grief, true as joy, is Heaven-born,
  And feeling now its sharpest thorn,
Fond hearts break 'neath their weight of woe.

And broken, how can they but bleed?
  Surcease of tears Time only brings—
  Love to its own in death still clings,
Like the torn vine to prostrate reed.

But see! From yonder radiant shore
  She beckons her loved ones to come;
  Earth's shifting lights and shadows from
To be with her forever more.

AN ANGEL'S BIRTH.

THE glory of the house is gone
Like sunset from the sky,
Or rose, that spite of tend'rest care
But beauteous blooms to die.

And as a weary child at eve
On mother's heart doth rest,
So did our loved one fall asleep
Upon her Saviour's breast.

A smile so Heav'nly lit her face
As she closed her tired eyes,
We knew that she was entering
The gateway of the skies.

So softly, gently, did she breathe
We scarce could catch her breath,
And then it ceased, and we believed
That what we saw was death.

And so it was to us sad end
  Of her sweet stay on Earth,
But unto souls in Paradise
  A sister's joyous birth.

SHE SLEEPS.

SHE sleeps beneath the stars to-night,
Beneath the full orb'd moon,
Whose softly falling shafts of light
Make fair the midnight noon.

She sleeps among the flowers to-night,
The flowers she loved so well,
Which scarce can hide their fond delight
That she doth with them dwell.

The pansy whispers: "She is here,"
The rose says: "Welcome home,"
And the blue violet drops a tear
Of joy, that she is come.

And in sweet strains ere died the day,
From many a shrub and tree
The birds sang forth a gladsome lay
That she should with them be.—

O stars! how can ye shine so bright—
And moon! thy rays distill,
When shades as of the darkest night
Our joyless bosoms fill?

O birds! how can ye carols swell,
O flowers! how can ye bloom,
When she who loved you all so well
Lies voiceless in the tomb?

"We sing;" the blithe birds seem to say,
"Because she midst the flowers,
Is not entirely yours to-day,
But Heaven's too, and ours."

And from the starry firmament
A sweet voice softly falls:
"Your loved one was to you but lent
From these celestial halls.

"And though 'tis meet that you should mourn
For her beneath the flowers,
Yet do not weep as those forlorn
Whom hopeless grief o'erpowers.

"For yonder grave keeps but the gold
In which was set the gem
That sparkles now with light untold
In Heaven's diadem."

TO ONE BEYOND THE GATES.

IF unto saints above, be giv'n
To comfort souls here sorrow riv'n,
Sweet Spirit speak to mine to-night
And cheer it with thy presence bright!

How changed the world with thee away!
December darkness glooms my May:
A joy no longer are its flowers
With thee not here to glad the hours.

How could sweet Spring that gave thee birth
Yield thee unto the cold dark Earth
While her rejoicing realm was rife
With new-born loveliness and life?

Why not let Winter drear, command
Thy footsteps to "the Silent Land,"
When she shall abdicate her throne
To rule the distant Austral zone?

Or Autumn weave of red and gold
A robe thy fair form to enfold,
In far off years, when from the plain
The birds have plumed their flight again?—

And art thou gone? Ah! it doth seem
My grief must be a troubled dream,
A dreadful nightmare that will take
Its clutches off me when I wake.

Shall wake to find thou art still here
As sweet and fair and doubly dear,
Unknowing how beloved thou wast
Until I fancied thou wert lost.

But no, I dream not,—thou art *dead!*
But ah! what means that word so dread?
Does death but prune the tree of life
Or to its very root lay knife?

Did'st thou but sweetly bud and bloom
To glad the earth and grace the tomb,
Or dost thou yet more beauteous rise
Among the flowers of Paradise?

No answer? Then hast thou forgot?—
Oh! can it be that thou art *not?*—
Has death's dark deep one only shore,
One only echo: "Nevermore?"

"Nay, doubting heart."—But to what strand
Did angels draw with loving hand
Thy barge across the shadowy sea,
That lies between thyself and me?

And of that sea what canst thou say
To us who here like children play
All thoughtless on the treacherous sand
And structures rear Time to withstand,

Forgetful that the rising tide
Will up the shore all-stealthy glide,
And sap our work of hand and brain,
No vestige of it to remain?

Do lightnings leap the dread gulf o'er
And thunders roll from shore to shore,
When those that sail it void of hope
Upon decks dark and slippery grope?

And does the tempest flee away
And zephyrs gently o'er it play,
When barques that carry such as thou
Cleave its black wave with silvern prow?

And of the land where thou dost dwell—
What canst thou of its mysteries tell
To us who wait the muffled oar
To urge us to the unknown shore?

Where is that country, near or far?—
Upon the earth or yonder star?—
What doth humanity await,
A change of place, or change of state?

For did'st thou wing from us thy flight,
Or dost thou linger, lost to sight
Because our natures are too dense
To fellowship with spirit-sense?

Nay, thou art gone—But where, ah! where
Is the retreat that thou dost share
In bliss ineffable e'ermore,
With the blest pilgrims gone before?

Can we within yon spangled skies
Behold the gates of Paradise,
And canst thou from its gardens gaze
Into the eyes which we upraise?

Is that fair land a land of flowers,
Of harp, and song, and idle hours,
Which all in thoughtless pleasure spend
With naught of further hope or end?

Or do ye in glad labors grow
To nobler measure than we know
Of mind and soul, and thus attain
To grace for which we strive in vain?

Thou canst not tell me? Nor can those
The secrets of thy bourne disclose
Who to the drum-beat of the years
Have thither marched with joy or tears.

And who that draweth *mortal* breath
Can solve life's deepest problem, death;
Or vision hath to penetrate
The mists that veil the spirit state?

But may I not hope that some day
Those baffling mists will melt away,
And to my raptured eyes reveal
The glories they now close conceal?

That thou wilt then to me make known
Grand truths to thee familiar grown,
And to my marveling ears rehearse
The story of the universe?

And though my heart can ne'er be stirred
On earth by thy sweet uttered word,
May not thy soul speak to my soul
And it to noble deeds control?

Canst thou not turn my feet away
From paths in which they go astray,
That in my better hours I hate,—
Paths sorrow-strewn and desolate?

May'st thou not nerve me for the fight
Between the evil and the right:
That warfare without arm'stice save
The truce proclaimed above the grave?

To fight my most relentless foe,
Myself, the subtlest that I know,—
Not one that bravely storms the gates
But who within them hidden waits.

If thou canst thus with me abide,
Then be my angel guard and guide
Through this dark land; and o'er the tide
That I must cross to reach thy side.

Ah! if I now could come to thee
And thou wouldst joy in seeing me,
I'd seek the ways with eager feet
That lead unto thy blest retreat.

Not yet.—Then, if the grace be giv'n
To thee to glad souls sorrow riv'n,
Sweet spirit speak to mine to-night
And cheer it with thy presence bright.

A MEMORY.

THE twilight falls on flood and field,
As 'yond the purpling peaks, the sun
Another day's march nearly done,
Hides from my gaze his flaming shield.

And on the wings of reverie,
Up through the portals of the Past,
From its hushed chamber dim and vast,
A shadowy host comes unto me.

Ah! memory is a two-edged sword
That heweth ways for thoughts that bless
And pangs remorseful that possess
The heart for evil deed and word.

Dark paths for phantoms grim that fret
The soul for sins long yielded up;
Unwelcome guests, that bid it sup
The bitter dregs of vain regret.

Ways, too, thank God! for visions sweet
  Of scenes and loved ones lost to sight—
  One, sainted now, who doth to-night
Look downward from her blest retreat.

To her my memory cleaves a path
  Long which fond recollections run,
  To kind words said, good actions done;—
The richest heritage it hath.

Words music made by gentle voice—
  God's sweetest gift to woman kind—
  Acts gendered by a noble mind
That made thoughts glad and good its choice.

For yon shy-glancing violet
  Is scarce more sweetly innocent
  Of sinful deed or wrong intent
Than she whose life's bright star has set.

Set, not as Venus dims and dies
  At eve beyond the western hills;
  But when as Morning-Star she thrills
The East, and melts in glad sunrise.

ASPIRATION.

AT times my yearning spirit seems
To catch some of the light that beams
On dwellers in a higher sphere;
And singers on that far off shore
Sweet measures of their songs to pour
Into my raptured, listening ear.

My better nature then awakes,
And from itself all joyful shakes,
The subtle and insidious foe
That in my weaker moments bends
Its purpose to ignoble ends,
Whose harvests are but sheaves of woe.

My thoughts take wing and eager rise
Like cage-freed birds into the skies,
Rejoicing to be unconfined
By fetters harsh which long have bound,
In dungeons gloomy and profound,
A groveling prisoner, my mind.

Ah! that I e'er might catch the light
That streams from out the portals bright
Of that far-off Celestial sphere;
That I might always hear the song
That 's wafted ever sweet and strong
To those that dwell its precincts near.

THE EVENING DEW.

HOW silently descends the dew
Upon the drooping flowers,
Their waning sweetness to renew
Through all the moon-lit hours.

From every petal gleams the light
Of many a liquid gem;
They sparkle on the robe of night,
Upon its golden hem.

The purple pansy smiles again,
And redder blooms the rose,
While every floweret of the fen
In brighter beauty blows.

The languid lily lifts her head,
The violet opes her eyes,
And all their sisters fair are fed
With nectar of the skies.

So be the dews of grace distilled
Into our hearts each night,
And every morning see them filled
With the Celestial light.

And from each happy, grateful breast
Shall glad thanksgivings rise,
And still ascend when we shall rest
'Neath palms of Paradise.

THE CELESTIAL CITY.

I KNOW not where resplendent rise
The golden gates of Paradise,
Upon what far off blissful shore
The blessed dead dwell evermore;
But oft it to my fancy seems
The sunset's glories are the gleams
Out-flashing from the portals bright
Of that fair land that has no night.

'Tis but an idle thought I know—
But can the gates Celestial glow
With more refulgent radiance,
Than those through which, with glittering lance,
With banners barred with blue and gold
And pennons streaming gay and bold,
The cohorts of triumphant day
March flushed with victory away?

Ah! Who can tell?—Beyond the ken
Of the cramped intellects of men,
The infinite solution lies
Of the vast problems of the skies:
But should I when life's day is done
March with those legions, victory won,
Skies lovelier I could not ask
Than yon bright arch 'neath which to bask.

And yet, less lovely—ah! how far—
The evening's glories must be—are,
Than those which for immortals wait
Beyond the New Jerusalem gate!
Blest city of eternal noon!
That needs not sun, nor stars, nor moon,
But thrills with the supernal light
That shines from God's own presence bright.

A SHEAF OF

SONNETS.

STAR QUESTIONINGS.

WHAT is your story, O ye wingèd spheres!
That in unerring and unflagging flight
Have onward circled, giving life and light
To worlds uncounted through the countless years,
And shall when our globe puny disappears
Amidst the gloom of an eternal night:
What power transcendent guideth you aright
In your stupendous and sublime careers?

O isles adrift in the celestial seas!
Shall angel pilot sometime guide us o'er
Those depths unfathomed, from bright strand to strand,
From pole-star to the glittering Pleiades,
And on and on, until at last before
The throne of Him that ruleth all, we stand?

THE UNSEARCHABLE.

"CANST thou, O Man! by searching find out God?"
—Say how from one seed this white lily grows,
And from another yonder blushing rose
In differing beauty from the self-same sod?
And hast thou in thy feeble grasp a rod
To gauge yon sparkling gulf—say whence it flows,
And through what depths unfathomable it goes
And will, when Time on Earth writes, "Ichabod!"

To seek thy little self to know, is vain--
Yon slimy pool hath secrets past the ken
Of mortal intellect—how shalt thou then
To knowledge of the infinite attain—
Upon thy puny close-clipped pinions rise
To pass the awful ramparts of the skies?

THE LOOM OF LIFE.

ALL men are weavers, and life is the loom
In which with threads oft strangely intricate
They weave the motley fabric of their fate;
Some with glad song, and others unto whom
No ray of joy e'er seems to reach through gloom
Of thwarted hope or hearth-stone desolate:
And some, who with an empty shuttle wait
Release from labor, in their dark'ning room.

Release from labor!—But what of the night
Whose shadows soon o'er all will softly creep—
Is it a dreamless and eternal sleep?
Nay, something says my loved ones passed from sight
Have wakened in a land of rest and bliss
Undreamed by us who labor on in this.

AT A GRAVE.

AND this, her tomb! How hard to realize
That in that dark and narrow dwelling-place
Are hid from us her once fair form, and face
With life illumined, and her tender eyes:
But she herself, thank God! is in the skies
To which I dare to think she addeth grace,
And muse if she upon my brow can trace
The love I bear her, and can hear the sighs
That will escape me—if she sees the flow'r
I lay upon the daisy-dappled mold
That doth her once bright earthly temple hold,
And near which, (though 'neath Time's benumbing pow'r
Tears flow not now as oft they flowed before),
I grieve, alas! because I grieve not more.

THE DEAD TRAGEDIAN.

RING down the curtain! He has played his part
Well, in the last grim tragedy of Earth,
And seldom hath a mind of ampler girth
Its genius lent unto the actor's art.
Not only bade he Pity's tears to start,
And to emotions deeper yet gave birth,
But in life's sterner drama proved his worth
And his possession of a noble heart.

Ring up the curtain! that fond tongues may tell
How, after bitter years of toil, and strife
With adverse fortune, he achieved the crown
The victor wears, and wore his laurels well,
Until, when in the very lists of life,
Death bade him halt, and lay his good lance down.

WASHINGTON.

AS some grand forest patriarch doth fall
Beneath the silent axe-strokes of the years;
So, 'neath them sank, as flowed a nation's tears
One never deaf unto his country's call,
And who in camp and in the council-hall
A conquest wrought of all her maiden-fears—
He whose exalted character endears
His memory to the alien nations all.

Yea, though unto the warrior's wreath of fame
And to a more resplendent civil crown
His right the world doth willingly proclaim,
Yet grander unto it is his renown
That none may on the page of History scan
The name of nobler patriot, or man.

THE BIRTH OF SONG.

METHINKS, no mother in the joyful hour
When first unto her bosom she doth press
Her new-born child, knows greater happiness
Than doth the poet, when the quick'ning pow'r
Of thought creative stirs his mind, as show'r
A once glad garden in the drouth's duress—
Ah! would that such a rain my soul might bless
And make it joy again with bud and flow'r
Of fancy, as in the long vanished days,
When visions to it came, and thoughts, and words,
On wing as free as do north-flying birds
In Springtime to the forest's leafy maze.—
And as I hope ere long they'll come to me
From field and grove and from the shimmering sea.

MIDSUMMER LONGINGS.

THERE is a fair green valley far away
Deep nestling in the bosom of the hills
For which my soul close-prisoned, pines to-day
To wander as its vagrant fancy wills,
By leaf-strewn stream, in forest, glen, and glade,
Where the sweet spirit of the woodland broods
O'er realm that Mammon's legions ne'er invade,
Hid from their gaze in those vast solitudes.

Thence Nature's blithe ambassadors the birds,
Speed unto me and in glad measures sing
A message all too sweet to voice in words,
That bids me home with them my flight to wing:
And gladly would I with her envoys fly
Did not a fate unkind, that boon deny.

A MOUNTAIN TEMPEST.

DEEP growlings from the swiftly dark'ning West
As though a mighty forest monarch there,
Had bounded from his rock-begirted lair
And was of some grim enemy in quest.
Here, Nature hushed into a dread unrest,
Till through the startled and quick-quivering air
Rings the wild storm-wind's strident bugle-blare
To herald advent of a fearful guest.

Now 'cross the sky zigzagging lightnings flash,
And soon—a liquid avalanche—the rain
Sweeps down the gorge, while warring thunders crash
As if to rend the murky veil in twain.
An half hour gone—birds sing within the glen,
And Nature, through her tears smiles glad again.

TO MY BOOKS.

I'M in my room alone, yet not alone;
For Heav'n hath granted me the happy fate
In you to hold sweet converse with the great,—
And with the noblest spirits Earth has known:
And when of self or work aweary grown
I am cast down, or when my heart 's elate,—
Or whatsoe'er my mood, on it ye wait,
And if I will, make your great thoughts my own.

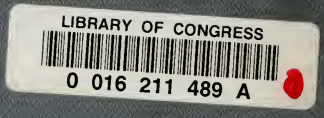
What pleasure in your fellowship I find,
O sweet companions of my solitude,
That never on my privacy intrude
And yet are always willing to my mind—
Methinks life oft would scarce be worth the living
Were ye not ever ready to be giving.

NAMES.

SHAKESPEARE hath somewhere said: "What 's in a name?"

And yet methinks he 'd wear an humbler crown
If his cognomen had been Black or Brown;
And Tennyson would have a dimmer fame,
And Coleridge be hailed with less acclaim,
Had their winged steeds been weighted down
With Jones or Smith—nor would the high renown
Of Milton—say as Scroggins—been the same.

Yea, "Rose by other name would smell as sweet,"
And yet there 's sweetness in the very word—
Resounding names have conquered glorious fates,
While those less tuneful did their bearers cheat
Of fame the world would gladly have conferred
Had their names been more pleasing advocates.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